



PRESS RELEASE

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MULTIPLE DEFENDANTS OF LOCAL VIOLENT DRUG GANG ARRESTED

Tucson, Ariz. – The U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Arizona, in conjunction with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Tucson Police Department and the Counter Narcotics Alliance (CNA) announced today the arrest of 10 members of a local violent drug organization based in Tucson, Ariz. Five individuals remain at large. Four additional arrests were made during today's operation.

Today's arrests were the result of a seven-month long investigation that targeted the Alfred Arvizu Drug Trafficking Organization. On May 11, 2005 a federal grand jury returned an indictment charging 15 people with various charges. The two main members, Alfred Arvizu and Ignacio Gomez, were indicted on Continuing Criminal Enterprise charges, and the other members were indicted on federal drug and weapons charges. The group was identified by local law enforcement as a violent and reckless drug gang responsible for numerous drive-by shootings, home invasions of drug stash houses and large-scale trafficking of drugs. Also according to the indictment, they reportedly stole \$85,000 in cash at gunpoint and divided it amongst the members.

The investigation indicated that Arvizu and his associates routinely committed drug related robberies and used them as the primary means of obtaining narcotics for further sale. The organization used a machine gun, handguns and tracking devices to commit these violent crimes as well as to protect and expand their narcotics network. Working together, DEA and local investigators foiled six robbery attempts that the organization had planned and prevented the organization from netting 2,000 pounds of marijuana.

U.S. Attorney Paul Charlton stated that "My office continues to work tirelessly in cooperation with local and federal law enforcement agencies and task forces to remove these types of violent criminals from Tucson and other communities." DEA Special Agent in Charge Timothy J. Landrum said, "Thanks to the cooperative success of this investigation, we have

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dismantled and immobilized this ruthless and destructive network from our communities. Let this be a message that we are committed to taking violent people off the street and eliminating the flow of these dangerous drugs. Tucson citizens are now safer as this organization lies in shambles.” Assistant Tucson Police Chief Kathleen Robinson added, “This case is an example of TPD’s ongoing effort to utilize a multi-jurisdictional approach in attacking the criminal elements that would threaten the quality of life in Tucson. The success of this investigation helps to ensure the safety of our neighborhoods and of our citizens by removing drug traffickers and individuals with a history of violence from our streets.”

Every time this organization operated, it put law abiding citizens at great risk. Their very methods of operation demonstrated a reckless disregard for the public’s safety. DEA and CNA encourage the public to remain vigilant around their homes and neighborhoods, and report any suspicious activity to CNA or a 24-Hour TIP Line at (520)88-CRIME.

Prior to today’s search warrants, the investigation yielded 2,200 pounds of marijuana and four weapons. The Tucson wholesale value of marijuana equates to \$1,100,000 with an East Coast re-sale value at \$2,200,000 to \$3,300,000.

DEA and CNA executed 14 federal search warrants in the Tucson Metropolitan area, and obtained 15 federal arrest warrants. (See attachment for a list of those taken in custody.) Maximum penalties for the charges on the indictment range from five years to life in prison. (See attachment for a list of penalty ranges.) Additional arrests are expected.

Agencies involved in this investigation were the DEA, CNA, the Tucson Police Department, and the Arizona High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area.

An indictment is simply the method by which a person is charged with criminal activity and raises no inference of guilt. An individual is presumed innocent until competent evidence is presented to a jury that establishes guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

The prosecution is being handled by James Burke, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson, Ariz.

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